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SNAPSHOT

Making the Connection: Market Linkage Doubles Incomes

Fledgling banana industry reviving with help from commercial buyer



Photo: Fintrac Inc.

Thanks to interventions from STAMP partner RVFP, farmers in Zimbabwe are realizing the viability of bananas as an income producing crop – the key was connecting them with the right market.

“The higher purchase price has motivated me to expand the area for banana production, and helped me to sustain my family. Soon I will be able to hire people to help me in the fields.”

- Mr. Luckson Nyamadzaio, smallholder farmer, Rusitu Valley, Manicaland province

Telling Our Story

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Market connections made through the USAID Smallholder Technology and Access to Markets Program (STAMP) are doubling incomes for smallholder banana farmers in the Rusitu Valley in Manicaland province.

In recent decades, banana production and demand in Zimbabwe has decreased significantly, due in part to the country's economic struggles. Many area farmers are hesitant to plant bananas because of their high production and transportation costs and unstable market value.

Luckson Nyamadzaio, a Rusitu Valley farmer, was about to give up on his banana crop after 10 years of low profit margins. He was unable to support his family or invest in his farm.

With assistance from USAID-STAMP partner Rusitu Valley Fresh Produce (RVFP), Nyamadzaio is learning good agricultural practices such as postharvest handling to improve the quality of his crop. RVFP is buying directly from farmers like Nyamadzaio at double the price they previously earned from middlemen traders.

With the increase in purchase price, Nyamadzaio has doubled his banana income from \$200 to \$400 per month. Increases in income of this scale allow farmers to purchase fertilizer, install irrigation equipment, and treat their farms like a business.

By incorporating these better practices, Rusitu Valley banana farmers have the potential to raise their yields by an average of 60 percent per bunch, further spurring economic development in the region.

“The higher purchase price has motivated me to expand the area for banana production, and helped me to sustain my family,” said Nyamadzaio.

He also hopes to expand further, providing employment opportunities for other rural residents.

RVFP is working with more than 2,500 farmers in the Rusitu Valley area, providing postharvest management training and linking smallholder farmers to commercial markets.

In one season alone, RVFP bought 413 tons of bananas, doubling the incomes for hundreds of farmers and improving food security in rural Zimbabwe.